

U.S. Bases Abroad Stir a New Debate

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WASHINGTON, April 8—The Nixon Administration has agreed to furnish Congress with a secret 1,200-page study describing alternative United States defense strategies for the coming decade and the overseas military bases that each strategy would require.

The survey, completed by a team of 30 senior civilian and military experts just before the Nixon Administration took office, finds that almost a quarter of a century after World War II the United States maintains 429 major and 2,972 minor overseas military bases, staffed by a million men, scattered around the globe.

These bases, according to the study, cover 4,000 square miles in 30 foreign countries as well as Hawaii and Alaska.

Stationed on them in addition to the servicemen are 500,000 dependents and 250,000 foreign employees. The annual cost of keeping the bases functioning is \$4-billion to \$5-billion.

Whether, in the missile age, the Defense Department still requires overseas bases, and if so for how long and for what specific commitments, is a question coming under increasing scrutiny—and producing mounting debate—in Congress and among the public.

There is no indication at this point that the Administration is prepared to use the survey as a basis for policy, and it has begun its own, possibly duplicative, review of the whole question.

The original survey, which took 10 months and 85,000 miles of travel to prepare, concludes that there can be

no radical reduction in base requirements without a comparable reduction in defense commitments to allies.

Critics of the overseas bases point out that they are focal points of anti-American agitation among people normally pleased to have United States protection but not eager to hear screaming jets or have their homes shaken by rumbling tanks or their daughters eyed by exuberant G.I.'s.

At home, there is mounting debate over the yearly costs of keeping troops and bases overseas, over the personnel tied up in manning them and, most of all, over the risks that United States responsibility for defending bases in an emergency may involve a new "Vietnam-type" adventure. Recent senatorial ques-

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tioning of Secretary of State William P. Rogers and other high Administration figures on possible commitments in renegotiation of United States base rights in Spain is one illustration of the growing concern and controversy here.

A Foreign Relations subcommittee headed by Senator Stuart Symington, Democrat of Missouri, is preparing for hearings on the origins and extensions of United States military commitments overseas. After protracted argument the Senator persuaded Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird to furnish a copy of the survey despite efforts to downgrade it by the staff of Henry A. Kissinger, national security adviser to the President, and by Nixon appointees in the Pentagon.

Defense experts, noting that the survey had been completed a month before the Nixon Administration took office, stressed not only that it was

the most thorough examination of its kind in 11 years but also that it had been prepared by career experts with no political ties.

In addition, Senator Edmund S. Muskie, Democrat of Maine, and others have called recently for the abandonment of United States control over Okinawa and for its reversion to Japan. How this would affect the undisputed right of the United States to store nuclear and other weapons on Okinawa for protection of the Western Pacific is unclear.

Alternative Strategies

The study already completed sets forth alternative strategies for the decade ending in 1978 and specifies the bases that would be needed—or "tailored"—to fit each strategy.

The study, still classified secret, was prepared at the direction of the Johnson Administration by Gen. Robert J. Wood, United States Army (retired), a former chief of the military-aid program, and Robert M. McClintock, a senior Foreign Service officer and for-

mer Ambassador to Argentina and Lebanon. Their team consisted of Defense and State Department civilians and military officers, assisted by Central Intelligence Agency specialists.

Those who have had access to the study describe its broad conclusions as follows:

¶There is little likelihood of early or substantial cutbacks in overseas bases as long as the United States intends to honor its treaty commitments.

¶Even such developments in military technology as the huge C-5A air-cargo plane and nuclear-powered warships do not eliminate the need for substantial numbers of overseas bases and skilled personnel.

¶To relinquish distant bases and concentrate forces nearer—or even within—the continental United States might cost more than keeping them where they are, on bases long since paid for.

The fate of the survey—the first of its kind in 11 years—is a matter of conjecture in Administration circles. Some officials suggest privately that even its 52-page summary may disappear unread into the archives while the Administration awaits the review President Nixon has ordered the Deputy Secretary of Defense, David Packard, to prepare by August.

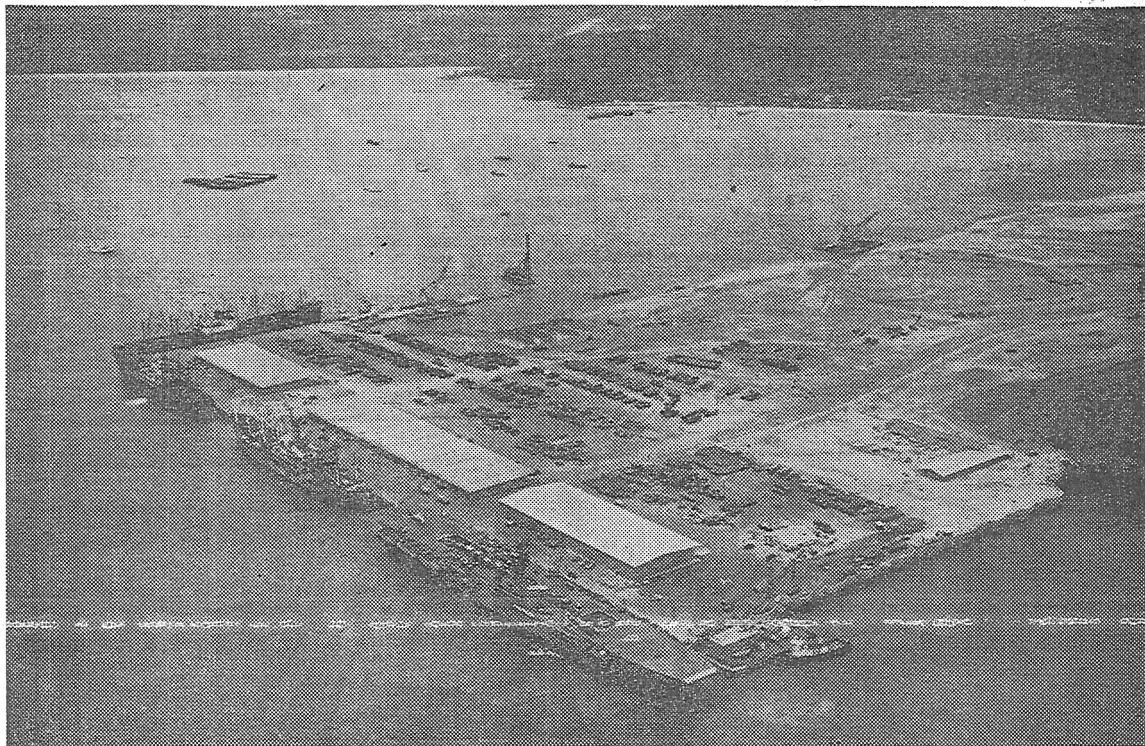
Inescapable Conclusion

Whatever its fate, those who have read the report say that one conclusion is inescapable: The costs of any United States pullback—particularly in the Pacific—would be high if the United States insisted also on retaining the same military capability in relation to the Communist powers.

Of the annual operating costs of bases and personnel overseas, \$660-million is for "mechanical maintenance." Approximately half the over-all cost, or \$2.5-billion, represents a drain on the United States position in international payments.

To maintain military and civilian forces for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Western Europe, for instance, costs \$1.5-billion annually in dollars. That figure takes account of the annual payment the West German Govern-

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This deep-water facility, built in Thailand by the U.S., is part of the U Tapao-Sattahip bomber base-logistics complex

The New York Times (By Terence Smith)

ment to help offset the dollar drain. The rest of the drain is incurred mainly in the Pacific, largely owing to the Vietnam war.

One of the most striking calculations to emerge from the Wood-McClintock study is reported to be the estimated costs of withdrawing military matériel and manpower from forward bases while, at the same time, maintaining full combat strength against potential enemies.

The study is said to have found that over 10 years the cost of shifting an Army division from the Western Pacific to Hawaii, where modern facilities exist, would cost approximately \$400-million. To shift the same division to the United States-administered Pacific trust territories (the Marshals or Carolines), where facilities would have to be built, might cost \$800-million or more over the same period.

To relinquish all United States facilities in Japan and Okinawa and replace them in say, Guam, Wake, Hawaii or

the continental United States would cost approximately \$10-billion over 10 years. Of this, the informants say, \$7-billion would be needed to add aircraft carriers and other ships to keep United States naval power in the Pacific unimpaired.

In the European zone the estimate is that to relinquish the Polaris submarine base at Rota, Spain—the only other one in Europe is at Holy Loch, Scotland—would cost \$450-million over 10 years. Unless the United States were willing to risk lowering its nuclear deterrent in the Mediterranean, the loss of Rota would require adding two or more Polaris submarines to the patrols now moving constantly between East Coast ports and the Mediterranean.

In preparing the study, the Wood-McClintock team analyzed military capabilities required to support each of several alternative strategies, which strategies required which bases, and where; the likelihood of enemy destruction and of the political "retainability"

of bases, plus the likely costs or savings resulting from the several options.

"The team offered the Government a sort of strategy blue-plate special—so much for steak, less for frankfurters, more bases if you wanted caviar, etc.," an informant said.

Others explained that the several strategies examined ranged from all-out involvement to help allies at the outset of any crisis to almost but not quite an isolationist, "Fortress America" posture. No single strategy was recommended; workable options were put forward.

'You Still Need Some Bases'

"Even taking the most restrictive view of United States responsibilities toward our allies," said an informant, "you would still need some overseas bases like the Azores or Greenland or Iceland to give early warning."

During the nineteen-fifties, officials recalled, as the Air Force shifted from B-52 bomb-

ers to intercontinental ballistic missiles, the Pentagon began yielding overseas real estate; the Strategic Air Command, for instance, cut its foreign bases by two-thirds.

The process was accelerated after President Kennedy discovered that the Pentagon still controlled 6,700 "bases" of varying size, 2,230 of them overseas. By early 1965, Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, at the insistence of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, had closed at least 59 foreign bases at an annual saving of at least \$140-million. United States servicemen overseas then numbered 500,000.

President Johnson's decision in July, 1965, to build up in Vietnam reversed the trend. Whether it will start down again once the Vietnam war is resolved remains to be seen.

"You've got to remember that we have two types of bases," said a leading expert recently. "There are the big base complexes in NATO and in the Pacific tied to our major treaty commitments. If we pull out we diminish the credibility of our deterrent."

The second type, he said, is the special-purpose base, for early warning, for monitoring missile or nuclear experiments, or for eavesdropping on electronic communications. Bases such as those in Ethiopia, Morocco, Turkey, Iceland, Greenland and the Azores, or the Wheelus Air Force base in Libya, where NATO pilots practice bombing, are gradually being eliminated as earth satellites and other new techniques emerge.

Nonetheless, according to some who have seen the Wood-McClintock study, it concludes that the United States will continue for the foreseeable future to need a number of major base complexes and attached personnel, as follows.